# CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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LETTER DATED 3 NOVEMBER 1999 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT TRANSMITTING THE TEXT OF A STATEMENT MADE BY AN OFFICIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY

I have the honour to transmit to you a statement by an official representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, dated 28 October 1999.

I should be grateful if you would publish the statement as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament, and distribute it to the delegations of all member States of the Conference and non-member States of the Conference participating in the work of the Conference.

(Signed) Vasily SIDOROV
Ambassador
Permanent Representative
of the Russian Federation
to the Conference on Disarmament

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STATEMENT BY AN OFFICIAL REPRESENTATIVE
OF THE RUSSIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY

28 October 1999

Russia is not conducting any negotiations with the United States on amendments to the ABM Treaty, much less so with the aim of "adjusting" it to the plans the Americans are known to have to create and deploy a national anti-missile defence system, which is banned under the Treaty.

In Cologne the Russian and United States Presidents agreed that the strengthening of strategic stability can occur only if previously achieved agreements on arms limitation and reduction, above all the ABM Treaty, are complied with.

Moscow is deeply worried about the adoption in the United States of a law that proclaims the deployment of a national ABM system to be United States policy. The deployment of such a system is incompatible with a key provision of the ABM Treaty, indeed its very essence: the commitment of each party not to deploy ABM systems for a defence of the territory of its country and not to provide a base for such defence. Abandoning that commitment would, in effect, "turn the ABM Treaty inside out" - the treaty would thus be permitting the very things it was developed and signed in order to ban, which would be nothing less than de facto termination of the Treaty.

The scrapping of the ABM Treaty would have irreparable consequences for nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation regime, for international security and the security of all States, including Russia and the United States. That is why Russia considers such "adaptation" of the Treaty to be inadmissible. Russia cannot be an accomplice to the destruction of the ABM Treaty.

Moscow believes that as the level of strategic offensive weapons falls, the importance of strict compliance with the ABM Treaty and of making it more viable dramatically increases. The concrete Russian proposals on ways to make the Treaty more viable, in particular to prevent the limitations it imposes from being evaded, are the subject of discussion at the current session of the ABM Treaty Standing Consultative Commission in Geneva, in which Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia, the United States and Ukraine are taking part.

In accordance with the statement issued in Cologne by the Russian and United States Presidents, discussions on START-3 and the ABM Treaty are continuing between Russia and the United States. The second round of these consultations was held in Moscow on 21 and 22 October between the Deputy Foreign Minister of Russia, G.V. Berdennikov, and acting Assistant United States Secretary of State J. Holum. In these as well as the previous consultations held in August, the Russian side has proceeded from the premises set forth above and has argued that the dismantling of the ABM Treaty would have dangerous consequences. No one should equate Russia's agreement to hold such discussions with agreement to the "adaptation" of the ABM Treaty.

As the Russian Foreign Minister stressed recently, "if the ABM Treaty is violated, it would render all the START negotiations meaningless". This has been and will be the position of the Russian side in discussions of the issues connected with the START-3 Treaty.

Changes in the strategic situation require that every measure should be taken to strengthen the ABM Treaty. It is on this basis, and not on the "ruins" of this treaty (and consequently on the "ruins" of the START, INF, CTBT, NPT and other treaties), that the new challenges should be met. Russia is prepared to continue the process of reduction of strategic offensive arms on this basis, in particular START-2 and START-3. It proposes discussing the creation of a global system to monitor the non-proliferation of missiles and missile technologies, and furthering cooperation with the United States and other States in areas connected with ABM systems, without breaching the limitations imposed by the ABM treaty.

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